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our nation and our state re-affirm the sanctity of all human life. We must re-dedicate ourselves to the proposition that all men—regardless of age or sex—are created equal—not merely born—and regardless of handicap or wantedness. When that day comes, as surely it must, this nation and this state will enjoy a new birth of freedom.●

TRAGEDY IN EAST TIMOR

HON. MATTHEW F. McHUGH

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, December 15, 1982

● Mr. McHUGH. Mr. Speaker, I have been concerned for some time about conditions in the former Portuguese colony of East Timor, a largely Roman Catholic territory that was invaded and occupied by Indonesia in late 1975.

In June, 1980, the Foreign Operations Subcommittee, on which I serve, held hearings on the situation in East Timor. The subcommittee focused on the serious food problems that resulted from warfare in the territory, the question of family reunification for those who wish to emigrate and rejoin family members abroad, and the broader issue of human rights violations.

These issues are still with us today, Mr. Speaker. As in 1980, there are conflicting reports regarding what is happening in East Timor, and thus many important questions remain unanswered. These issues deserve our serious consideration.

For the benefit of those of our colleagues who may not be familiar with recent developments in East Timor, I am inserting into the RECORD a number of items that have appeared in the press recently.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 7, 1982]

INDONESIA ACCUSED OF ABUSES IN TIMOR

(By Bernard Weinraub)

WASHINGTON, October 6.—A bipartisan group of senators and representatives, citing reports of widespread hunger and human rights abuses in East Timor, has urged the Indonesian Government to allow international relief agencies into the area.

At the same time, the lawmakers called for a Senate inquiry into the impact of the Indonesian takeover of East Timor seven years ago and the famine and violence that have beset the island, a former Portugese colony, since then.

The Congressional move came in advance of a scheduled visit to Washington next week by President Suharto of Indonesia.

"In the past there has been very little attention paid to this tragedy, partly because no one ever heard of East Timor, and partly because access has been limited," said Senator David Durenberger, Republican of Minnesota. "The more news that comes out, the more that Congress is going to start asking some hard questions about U.S. policy, particularly arms sales and human rights policies."

100,000 DIE IN FAMINE

At least 100,000 people in a famine in East Timor, a predominantly Roman Catholic territory, after the Indonesian annexation.

Representative Tony P. Hall, Democrat of Ohio, said recently that the 1975 famine was comparable to the ones in Biafra and Cambodia. He said that "serious food shortages resulting from Indonesian military operations" continued but were largely unnoticed because of restrictions by Indonesia on foreign journalists and other visitors.

In recent years, an insurgency against Indonesia has added to the disruption, resulting in the loss of civil rights for the people of East Timor, according to Congressional critics of Indonesia.

"We recognize the importance of Indonesia to United States foreign policy and to stability within the region," a group of senators said in a letter to Secretary of State George P. Shultz. "We applaud as well the apparent improvements made during 1981. But we are deeply concerned that the situation may deteriorate, and we are deeply disturbed at the reports of famine."

U.S. IS ASKED TO MEDIATE

The senators, including Daniel Patrick Moynihan, Democrat of New York, and Alfonse D'Amato, Republican of New York, urged the Indonesians to permit "humanitarian contributions of food and medical supplies for the Timorese," as well as a "complete survey of the actual situation in East Timor by appropriate international relief and humanitarian agencies."

The senators also called on the Reagan Administration to "mediate with the Indonesians" to allow the reunification of families in East Timor and Portugal.

Among the signers of the letter to Mr. Shultz were Senators Henry M. Jackson, Democrat of Washington; Nancy Landon Kassebaum, Republican of Kansas; Richard G. Lugar, Republican of Indiana; John Heinz and Arlen Specter, Republicans of Pennsylvania; Carl Levin, Democrat of Michigan, and Mark O. Hatfield, Republican of Oregon.

Senator Charles H. Percy, Republican of Illinois, chairman of the Foreign Relations Committee, was urged to hold hearings to "determine as accurately as possible the actual situation in East Timor."

The senators said the Indonesian takeover, which followed the collapse of the Portuguese colonial system, "resulted in the forcible annexation of East Timor."

"United States policy has been to accept this unilateral annexation as a fact of life without recognizing that an act of self-determination by the Timorese people has taken place," they said.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 9, 1982]

FORGOTTEN SORROWS IN TIMOR

Aggression forgotten is aggression rewarded. Because Britain could send a fleet to the Falklands, Argentina paid in bitter coin for its seizure of the islands. Indonesia had better luck seven years ago: it grabbed East Timor, a former Portuguese colony, and heard only token protest. The principle was the same but Indonesia's crime is nearly forgotten.

Yet not wholly forgotten. On the eve of President Reagan's meeting with Indonesia's President Suharto, a bipartisan group in Congress has asked America not to avert its eyes.

East Timor was indifferently governed from Lisbon for 400 years. Its half-million people, predominantly Catholic, were unprepared when independence was thrust upon them. But at worst, it was a slum; now it is a wasting prison. As many as 200,000 people may have perished under Indonesia's occupation. And the denials of ill treatment remain implausible as long as Jakarta refuses both free exit to Timorese and Portuguese nationals and unimpeded entry to rlief organizations.

At the very least, Indonesia's rulers have to be persuaded to open the doors to East Timor. But there is nothing persuasive about a United Nations that regularly threatens Israel for much lesser transgressions while gently chiding Indonesia for the abduction of a whole people. And it does not help for the United States to mute its protest in gratitude for Indonesia's anti-Communism.

Protesting the situation in East Timor is not just a matter of arraigning a new nation for what the old colonial powers used to do with impunity. It is a way to help the United Nations and world opinion elevate standards of conduct. What other help is available to a remote and vulnerable people when their cause dwindles to a footnote?

Creditably, though tardily, Portugal is not shrugging. Prime Minister Pinto Balsemao reminded the General Assembly last week that he still cared. He appealed for using all mechanisms of the U.N. to find a remedy. Maybe the effort would fail. So far, it hasn't really been made.

[From the New York Times, Oct. 11, 1982]

A SMALL, FAR-OFF PLACE

(By Anthony Lewis)

President Reagan is host in Washington this week to President Suharto of Indonesia. The visit is inevitably going to be, in large part, an occasion to compliment an Asian leader important to the United States. But there is one uncomfortable issue that Mr. Reagan must raise if he is fairly to represent American concerns.

The issue is East Timor. It is a small place, one of the most remote and obscure on earth. But in recent years more and more people in the world, including U.S. Senators and Representatives, have become aware of terrible things happening in East Timor and have spoken out. The issue nags at the conscience.

East Timor is a former Portuguese colony, the eastern half of an island north of Australia. The western half of the island was part of Indonesia. When Portugal abandoned the colony in 1975, Indonesian troops marched in, crushed an independence movement, occupied the territory and declared it a province of Indonesia.

Famine followed the invasion. At least 100,000 people died—nearly a fifth of the population. The human misery may have been comparable to what happened in Cambodia, but few outsiders knew about it at the time.

Indonesia has kept the territory largely cut off from the outside world. Until recently no foreign journalists or government representatives were allowed to visit East Timor. The Timorese are not allowed to leave, with few exceptions.

In response to foreign pressure, in part from the United States, the Indonesian Government has permitted some visitors recently. It signed an agreement with UNICEF for a primary health care project, though UNICEF was not permitted to have a representative stationed regularly in East Timor. The International Committee of the Red Cross was allowed for the first time to visit a detention camp for Timorese suspected of political unreliability.

Last spring a Philadelphia Inquirer reporter, Rod Nordland, spent 11 days touring East Timor. He found signs of continuing hunger and of represssion by the authorities. People who talked with him were later summoned to military intelligence headquarters and interrogated. He said no one may leave his village without permission. He reported that many people have been taken from their homes and put in resettlement villages.

CIVILIANS HERDED INTO CAMPS

But then tens of thousands of Indonesian troops forced the group to retreat into the island's rugged uplands. It reportedly took thousands of its followers with it.

Many of the guerrillas' civilian supporters, however, are now said to have been herded by the Indonesian Army into new settlements or detained. The local popularity of the guerrillas has waned, according to diplomats who recently visited the island.

Although the Indonesian Government has restricted all access to the guerrillas' areas of operation for years, several Western embassies here place the rebels' strength at between 200 and 400 armed men. Other recent estimates have placed the figure as high as 600.

The hard core can sometimes call on supporters to help it fight, all sources agree. But its total strength is said to be shrinking, and most Western estimates of the organization's military strength are little higher than the estimates offered by the Indonesian Government.

Western diplomats say they do not think that the guerrillas have received any weapons from abroad. How much remains of their Portuguese ammunition is unknown, but they are said to have managed to seize some American-supplied weapons from Indonesian troops.

The guerrillas are thought to be suffering from food shortages as the Indonesian Army has extended control over civilian settlements that might have once supplied them. Hunger has caused some guerrillas to surrender; others are said to depend on armed foraging.

"Whoever's up in the mountains, they're starving," said Patrick C. Johns, director in Indonesia for Catholic Relief Services, which supervises an agricultural development project west of Dili. "They come down to steal cows, to steal food."

Mr. Johns said he believed the Government was consolidating its control. For example, he said, there were formerly 13 military checkpoints along the 50-mile main road between Dili and Baukau on the northern coast. "Now I don't think there are any," he said.

TIMORESE INDUCTED

Despite the gains made by the Indonesian Government, fighting broke out again last August, and several guerrilla raids apparently were well organized.

Government efforts to extend control included the launching in July 1981 of a large drive against the guerrillas in which thousands of Timorese were inducted to precede army troops and sweep across large areas on foot. Amnesty International, the London-based human rights organization, and several diplomats here say that the operation resulted in civilian deaths and that it kept farmers from harvesting their crops.

Two of the four Government battalions in East Timor, the 744th and the 745th, are identified as Timorese, and some reports have said they have been responsible for some civilian deaths.

[From the New York Times, Nov. 28, 1982]

EAST TIMOR'S FOOD SITUATION IS REPORTED IMPROVING

(By Colin Campbell)

JAKARTA, INDONESIA.—Western diplomats and international aid workers here who have traveled in East Timor over the last few months say that food supplies there are gradually increasing.

They said that fears that famine might be imminent in the area, which Indonesia annexed in 1976, were exagerated. Most visitors also said reports charging that Indonesian authorities had violated human rights in East Timor through detentions and other actions had been difficult to investigate.

Western correspondents have been denied permission to do reporting in East Timor. One reporter's requests were turned down on the ground that there were too few helicopters to transport a visitor across its roadless mountain terrain, and that the province's newly appointed Governor, Mario Carrascolao, needed "time to breathe."

East Timor, a former Portuguese colony on the eastern half of an island about 350 miles north of Australia, was invaded from the Indonesian western half late in 1975 and declared Indonesia's 27th province in 1976. The United Nations General Assembly has refused to accept the annexation, although its votes on the issue have narrowed.

100,000 MAY HAVE DIED SINCE 1975

More than 100,000 of the province's original 650,000 people are believed to have died between 1975 and 1980 as a result of civil war, invasion, the resistance of Timorese Fretilin guerrillas and famine. The famine, in the late 1970's, has been attributed to the dislocation of farmers.

It was reportedly brought under control by early 1981 with the aid of international food shipments, mostly from the Untied States. But renewed concern had been raised by warnings late last year by the head of the province's Roman Catholic Church and by a report of malnutrition published last spring in The Philadelphia Inquirer after an 11-day tour of East Timor.

A point of wide concern is that several Timorese settlements have been cut off from their fields by the Indonesian Army for security reasons. According to Pierre Guberon, the delegate here of the International Committee of the Red Cross, imports of food are needed in four such settlements—Iliomar, Luro, Turiscai and Laclubar.

The heads of the Indonesian offices of the United Nations Children's Fund and the American-based Catholic Relief Services, both of which run aid programs in East Timor, said that their own travels and reports from field workers provided no evidence of impending famine.

"We're flip-flopping all over the place in our helicopter," said Victor Soler-Sala, the Unicef representative. "If there was the slightest sign of famine—not even famine, just severe hunger—it would be dealt with immediately."

He said food stocks and the general level of nutrition in East Timor appeared to him no worse than on other backward islands at the eastern end of Indonesia, and that over the course of a year he had seen nutrition improve.

He said the Indonesian Government was spending more per capita on East Timor than almost anywhere else in the country. He attributed this in part to what he described as the diplomatic trouble that reports of famine in East Timor had caused.

Unicef supplies food, health care, clean water and Indonesian-language instruction to mothers and children in seven settlements of eastern and central East Timor.

Patrick C. Johns, director of Catholic Relief Services, said that from his more limited observations along the north coast, people were not starving. His organization, which was the primary relief agency in heavily Catholic East Timor during the famine, is now supporting an agricultural development project in the Loes River valley west of Dili, the provincial capital.

Aid officials and diplomats who have visited the island have noted that East Timor is still poorly fed by world standards, that its agricultural future is precarious and that a drought affecting most of Indonesia also affects Timor.●